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C O N F I D E N T I A L BAGHDAD 005004

SIPDIS

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SUBJECT: ON EVE OF ELECTION BAGHDAD LEADERS ANTICIPATE
LARGE, PEACEFUL TURNOUT.

Classified By: Political Counselor Robert S. Ford,
for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

1. (C) PolOff spoke with selected leaders throughout Baghdad to gauge the mood of the public on the eve of the December 15 elections. In NE Baghdad Sunni Arab Dr. Riyadh Hassir Al Adhath, District Advisory Council (DAC) and City Councilman reports the largely Sunni district of Al Adhamiyah is peaceful and expecting a large turnout of voters. In Central Old Town Baghdad, Al Rusafa DAC Councilman, Shia secular politician Adnan Abdul Hassan, said the district is quiet, and he expected 45 percent of the people in Rusafa to support Alawi.

2. (C) Omar Hayder Ali, a Sunni Arab member of the Baghdad City Council, told PolOff things were peaceful in his neighborhood of Maghrif except for one bomb on December 15 that appeared to explode in the adjacent neighborhood of Wazirrya. Omar also said people were concerned about the reports of thousands of forged ballots being discovered from Iran. Shia secular politician Hussein Hafed Al Bahraini, an advisor to the mayor of Baghdad, said the people in Karada District are ready to vote and show their support for the democratic process.

3. (SBU) Comment. Our contacts indicate that throughout Baghdad Province the best description is so far so good. These four politicians, who all support secular parties, were optimistic that their parties would do well and that the election might have problems but generally would be credible. Their optimism is matched, at least publicly, by Shia Islamists here demonstrating peacefully tonight near the International Zone.

KHALILZAD